

## **The Makai Watch Program**

### **Enhancing Community Involvement in the Management of Near-Shore Marine Resources**

#### **Background**

As part of our collective efforts to enhance the management of near-shore marine resources, the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), the Community Conservation Network (CCN), and the Hawaii Wildlife Fund (HWF) are collaborating to create a statewide Makai Watch Program designed to involve the public in the oversight and management of important marine areas in three ways:

- Education and Outreach: Makai Watch will train community members in high priority coastal areas to provide information about marine ecology, regulations, best fishing practices, and other items important to their area. These outreach efforts will likely reduce the misuse of marine resources as resource users become more aware of both the law and local best practices to conserve marine resources.
- Surveillance and Enforcement: While education and outreach will help to reduce illegal activities, poaching is likely to continue in some areas. To reduce the willful disregard for laws and regulations governing marine resource use, local community members will be trained in how to observe and identify illegal activities, and will have a direct relationship with DOCARE so that they can immediately report violations. They will also be trained in how to collect evidence so that they can help DOCARE build a strong case against violators.
- Biological and Human Use Monitoring: To encourage continued community participation, it is important that community members understand the condition of marine resources, how they are being used, and how they change over time. Makai Watch volunteers will learn how to collect information on human use of marine resources (fishing, kayaking, collecting, etc) and on the biological condition of those resources. Over time, they will see the results of their management actions, such as increasing numbers of fish or improving coral health, and become stronger advocates for protection and the appropriate use of the resources.

#### **Community Involvement in Makai Watch: What Does it Take**

Several communities throughout Hawaii have expressed an interest in developing Makai Watch Programs in their areas. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are committed to helping these communities develop their programs in cooperation with DLNR. Each community that is interested in developing a Makai Watch Program should have at a minimum:

1. A biologically significant marine area, including but not limited to marine managed areas such as a Marine Life Conservation District (MLCD) or Fisheries Management Area (FMA).
2. A motivated community member to start up the program, organize community volunteers, work with the support of NGOs to identify the program goals, threats, and strategies to address those threats, and raise funds to support the program.
3. Broad community support and people who are willing to volunteer with the program.
4. An ability to raise public and private funds for their program.

### **Next Steps: Strengthening and Expanding Makai Watch**

There are currently two communities on the Big Island that have active Makai Watch Programs: 1) Miloli'i in South Kona, and 2) Wai Opae in Kapoho on the East Side of the island. Both programs are approximately one year old, have trained community members working on Makai Watch, have raised a combination of public and private funds to run their programs, and are coordinating with DLNR and at least one private NGO. The most important thing we have learned from working with these two communities is that it takes a significant investment of time and resources from community members and their NGO partners to establish an effective Makai Watch program. The greatest challenge and limiting factor in taking this program statewide will be the capacity of the NGOs and DLNR to provide follow up for each of the interested communities. To address this issue, we will focus primarily on those communities with nearshore marine resources of statewide significance. For other interested communities, we will provide group training opportunities and a "how to" manual for them to start their own programs. To be effective, each community will, however, require training from and a direct link to DOCARE to ensure that violators will be cited and prosecuted.

In order to strengthen and expand the existing Makai Watch Programs, DLNR, TNC, CCN, and HWF will:

1. Form a committee to develop a workshop agenda and training modules for a Fall 2005 Makai Watch community workshop (CCN)
2. Create a Makai Watch training curriculum by May 2005 (CCN)
3. Draft a Makai Watch strategic work plan and budget by June 2005 (TNC)
4. Provide ongoing funding and/or technical assistance to communities at Milolii (CCN), Ahihi Kinau (HWF) and Wai Opae (TNC)
5. Identify additional key communities in which to focus Makai Watch by July 2005 (TNC)
6. Conduct a workshop to train 4-6 key Makai Watch communities in September 2005 (CCN)
7. Follow up with each key community to develop a strategic work plan for implementing Makai Watch in their community by December 2005 (all NGOs)
8. Develop a manual and resource guide for communities interested in starting Makai Watch programs by December 2005 (CCN)
9. Continue to raise additional public and private funds for new and ongoing Makai Watch programs (TNC, CCN)
10. Conduct an in-depth analysis of program effectiveness by June 2006 (TNC).

(Names in parentheses indicate lead organization).

TNC, CCN, and HWF are committed to working with coastal communities to implement Makai Watch throughout the state. While each organization has its own mission and goals, we are all interested in linking communities more closely with their natural resources and with the agencies who share responsibility for managing and protecting them. In collaboration with DLNR, we will:

1. Develop and deliver to communities training materials for each component of Makai Watch.
2. Provide technical assistance in implementing Makai Watch in key communities.
3. Develop Makai Watch protocol and a manual for interested communities.
4. Provide opportunities for Makai Watch communities to network and learn from each other's experiences.
5. Solicit public and private funding for Makai Watch.